GREEKS AND HYPERBOREANS

♦ IN HONOUR OF DR. HABIL. AUREL RUSTOIU
ON HIS 6OTH BIRTHDAY



CULTURAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN BASIN AND THE POPULATIONS FROM THE PONTIC STEPPES AND TEMPERATE EUROPE (8TH CENTURY BC - 4TH CENTURY AD).

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SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

Friday, 10 October 2025

Registration (09:00 - 16:00)			
10:00	Official opening		
12:00		COFFEE BREAK & LUNCH BREAK	

Session 1: Chair Wolfgang DAVID

13:30 Vasile IARMULSCHI, Nicolai BATOG (KEYNOTE LECTURE)

Reflections on Hellenistic and Late Republican imports from the Middle Dnieper region

14:00 Valentin BOTTEZ, Sorin AlLINCĂI, Alexandra ŢÂRLEA, Iulia-Alexandra ILIESCU, Radu-Octavian STĂNESCU

The *Beidaud Archaeological Microzone*. The Settlements of the Hamangia Valley between Thracian, Greek and Roman influences

14:20 Lucretiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA

The beneficiarii of Montana and vicinia. Economic and strategic role

14:40 **Dorel MICLE, Alexandru HEGYI, Despoina TSARDAKA, Emilian ALEXANDRESCU, Vlad NISTOR, Antal LUKÁCS, Lucian MICLE**

Archaeological field research for the analysis of the ancient landscape at the archaeological sites in the Kardamyla and Viki areas (Chios, Greece)

15:00 Gely FRAGOU, Aris TSARAVOPOULOS

The production of amphorae and lagynoi on the island of Chios (Greece) and their presence in the Black Sea region

15:20 Ana ODOCHICIUC, Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA

Mapping hinterland resources in the rural landscape of Greek poleis Istros and Tomis during the Roman period

15:40 Lavinia GRUMEZA, Denis TOPAL, Senica ŢURCANU

Medusa in Hyperborea: Greek Mirrors with Gorgon Handles in Scythian Burials North of the Black Sea

16:00 **COFFEE BREAK**

Session 2: Chair Marija LJUŠTINA

16:20 Ivan VRANIĆ

Metal finds from the site Kale – Krševica (5th–3rd Century BCE)

16:40 Elena PARALOVO, Tomáš MANGEL, Richard THÉR

Is everything from Greece? Rethinking technological vectors in the transmission of Kiln technologies to Central Europe in the Iron Age

17:00 Wolfgang DAVID

The encounter between the Greeks and the world of the Gauls/Celts/Galatians (5th to 3rd century BC) in the light of Central European research

17:20 **Julij EMILOV**

Gold Connections: Tsibar Neck Ring. Commentaria Archaeologica et Historica

17:40 Aurel RUSTOIU

From South to North. Travelling images and symbols across the northern Balkans in the 4th-1st centuries BC

19:00 WELCOME DINNER

Saturday, 11 October 2025

Registration (08:00 - 16:00)

Session 3: Chair Julij EMILOV

08:40 Boris KAVUR

So far but so close. Drinking practices in the Carpathian basin

09:00 Michael MEYER, Octavian MUNTEANU, Cristian COROLENCO

Gifts of the Greeks: Hellenistic imports at Ivancea Sub Pădure (Poienești-Lucașeuca culture)

09:20 Milena TONKOVA, Zdravko DIMITROV

Thracians and Celts in the Region of Chirpan Eminences (Southern Bulgaria): the Karakochova burial mound

09:40 Malvinka URÁK

Imported Prestige? Material Traces of Mediterranean Influences in the Collections of the National Museum of Transylvanian History

10:00 Andrei GEORGESCU

Shared Customs, Divergent Identities: Toiletry Sets from the Greek World to the Carpathian Basin

10:20 Adrian Cătălin CĂSĂLEAN

Glass beads discovered in the eastern Carpathian basin as indicators of interaction with the eastern Mediterranean and the shores of the Black Sea during the La Tène period

10:40 COFFEE BREAK

Session 4: Chair Vasile IARMULSCHI

11:00 Katarina DMITROVIĆ, Marija LJUŠTINA

At the crossroads towards Hyperborea: Atenica and its world

11:20 Branislav KOVÁR, Lucia BENEDIKOVÁ

Hic sunt Dracones – The Iconography of Dragons in Iron Age Archaeological Finds in the North of the Carpathian Basin

11:40 Mihail BĂŢ, Aurel ZANOCI

Change and exchange: a dichotomous approach to the Late Iron Age Archaeology of the East-Carpathian space in the context of the cultural interactions between the Greeks and 'Barbarians'

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

Session 5: Chair Lucia BENEDIKOVÁ

13:40 Diandra-Natalia PALL-BOTH

On the Scarcity of Greek-Style Grain Mills in Dacian Fortifications: Interpretations and Research Perspectives

14:00 Andreea DRĂGAN

Selective exchange of goods and ideas between the Dacians and the Greeks. The case of painted pottery

14:20 Mariana-Cristina POPESCU, Gabriela GHEORGHIU

Traces of interactions between Greeks and Barbarians north of the Danube, reflected in the production of the barbarian pottery in the 2nd c. BC - 1st c. AD

14:40 Claudiu PURDEA

Cultural interactions between Greeks and Dacians. Case study: Greek coins discovered in the Şureanu Mountains area with metal detectors

15:00 Ana HAMAT, Ştefan GEORGESCU

Roman examples of *crepundia* type necklaces and their roots in the Greek world. A special look to the provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior/Scythia Minor

15:20 **Iosif Vasile FERENCZ, Roxana CIRT**

From Walls to Weights: Assessing Hellenistic Modules at the Ardeu Fortress

15:40 Horea POP, Mariana-Cristina POPESCU

Northwestern Dacia: Periphery space?

16:00 COFFEE BREAK

Session 6: Chair Ivan VRANIĆ

16:20 **Ioan Cristian CIREAP**

Hellenistic echoes in the Lower Mureş basin

16:40 Marius Mihai CIUTA

The revisited story of an unexpected find. The set of Hellenistic jewelleries from Căpâlna

17:00 Beatrice CIUTA

Plants, Power, and Connectivity: Archaeobotanical Insights from La Tène Transylvania

17:20 Marina MUSTEAŢĂ

The funerary use of sulphur in the Roman Mediterranean World: evidence from the province of Dacia and beyond

17:40 **Bogdan LĂPUŞAN**

'Grasping the Past': Bronze Chest Handles with Graeco-Roman Motifs in Roman Dacia

18:00 Mariana EGRI

Why keep it simple? The Dionysian marine *thiasos* on a ceramic mould from Apulum (Alba Iulia, Romania)

19:00 FAREWELL DINNER

ABSTRACTS

Reflections on Hellenistic and Late Republican imports from the Middle Dnieper region Vasile IARMULSCHI, Nicolai BATOG

Among the archaeological remains discovered in the Zarubincy-type sites of the Middle Dnieper region, a special place is occupied by Hellenistic and late republican 'imports'. In our communication we want to discuss these categories, which, together with clothing accessories, represent vestiges with a special chronological relevance. At the same time, the analysis of imports can provide us with data on the contacts between these populations and the 'classical world'.

The *Beidaud Archaeological Microzone*. The Settlements of the Hamangia Valley between Thracian, Greek and Roman influences

Valentin BOTTEZ, Sorin AlLINCĂI, Alexandra ŢÂRLEA, Iulia-Alexandra ILIESCU, Radu-Octavian STĂNESCU

The area around the present-day commune of Beidaud (Tulcea County, Romania), although briefly researched at the end of the 1970', remained mostly un-investigated until 2020, when a research project, led by the University of Bucharest in partnership with ICEM Tulcea, started exploring it in the frame of the *Beidaud Arachaeological Microzone*, a cluster of (initially) four archaeological sites along the Hamangia Valley. The new project proposes a multi-proxy approach, trying to understand the interaction between the different populations (local Thracians/Scythians and Greek and Roman colonists) that successively or concomitantly inhabited the area, as well as between those human communities and their environment.

The *beneficiarii* of Montana and *vicinia*. Economic and strategic role Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA

The author reassesses the epigraphic file of *beneficiarii* at Montana, trying to emphasize not only their military tasks, but also their connections with the economic milieu. In this respect, the relations with the resources exploitation and the customs will be analyzed. Last but not least, their possible police tasks will not be neglected, especially in connection with roads survey.

Archaeological field research for the analysis of the ancient landscape at the archaeological sites in the Kardamyla and Viki areas (Chios, Greece)

Dorel MICLE, Alexandru HEGYI, Despoina TSARDAKA, Emilian ALEXANDRESCU, Vlad NISTOR, Antal LUKÁCS

Kardamyla and Viki are two areas rich in history and archaeology located at the northern extremity of the island of Chios. Our fieldwork, conducted between 2018 and 2024 with a two-year hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed to identify and geolocate archaeological features. We documented a substantial number of remains, ranging from isolated graves and rainwater-harvesting cisterns to stone fortifications and agricultural terrace systems.

The goal of our research was to reconstruct the archaeological landscape of the region and to elucidate relationships between people and environment—including geomorphological setting, maritime access and transport, and the availability of raw-material resources.

The survey focused on settlement patterns and on the microtopography of sites, within the framework of landscape archaeology.

The production of amphorae and lagynoi on the island of Chios (Greece) and their presence in the Black Sea region

Gely FRAGOU, Aris TSARAVOPOULOS

The island of Chios is located in the northern Aegean holding an important geographical position in the north-south trade axis between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Chios began its contacts with the Black Sea since the 7th c. BC as a result of the Greek colonization. The northern sea route through the Hellespont and the Bosporus, at the crossroads of the Aegean, Levantine, Anatolia and the Danube region connected the fertile productive and significant consumption centers of the Black Sea region with the Mediterranean production centers until the 7th c. AD. Supplies from the Mediterranean reached the Black Sea as well.

All the above is certified by amphorae and lagynoi handles from the island of Chios that have been found in the Black Sea region. The above-mentioned vessels transported the famous in antiquity Chian wine and the Chian mastic, the resin that was probably contained in the excellent qualitative and highly priced Chian wine. Another famous in antiquity Chian product was the olives and olive oil for which the form of amphorae varied so as to be easier to obtain the product.

Our contribution is significant because this is material definitely Chian that comes from pits of kilns and pottery workshops as well. This certainty leads to the identification of the handles as Chian, an origin that had not been recognized before, as they are not visible in the publications of the northern and western coast of the Black Sea.

There are different stamp dies with various characteristics that will be discussed that have been attested in the Black Sea region too. Chian stamp bear whole and abbreviated names, monograms and letters in ligature and symbols that will be described and discussed.

Mapping hinterland resources in the rural landscape of Greek poleis Istros and Tomis during the Roman period

Ana ODOCHICIUC, Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA

Mapping the rural territories of two Greek poleis in the Roman province of Moesia Inferior (Romania and Bulgaria) is essential for understanding their agricultural potential and the patterns of urban expansion or retreat during the 1st–3rd centuries AD. This study investigates the location of rural sites through field research, considering geography, soil quality, and proximity to resources, roads, and water sources. The goal is to identify the criteria Roman farmers used when selecting sites and to determine which resources were considered most desirable. For instance, do more sites appear on a particular geological type simply because it covers the largest area, or was its selection intentional? By analysing these patterns, we can assess site preferences and settlement dynamics. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have transformed archaeological research by enabling spatial analysis, predictive modelling, and landscape reconstruction. This paper examines GIS applications in site detection, environmental reconstruction, and cultural landscape analysis while addressing associated challenges and future directions. Integrating GIS with remote sensing, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics can further enhance archaeological methodologies and provide new insights into past human activities.

Medusa in Hyperborea: Greek Mirrors with Gorgon Handles in Scythian Burials North of the Black Sea

Lavinia GRUMEZA, Denis TOPAL, Senica ȚURCANU

Medusa, a central figure of Greek mythology, embodies a complex interplay of fear, power, beauty, and protection. Her image, believed to possess apotropaic qualities capable of warding off evil, was widely adopted not only within the Greek world but also far beyond, among the nomadic cultures of the north and northwest of the Black Sea. This paper examines the fascinating echoes of Greek mythological imagery in these northern regions, focusing on two remarkable discoveries from Gura Văii (Botoșani County, Romania) and Mereni (Republic of Moldova). Both sites yielded two large bronze mirrors with long handles ending in medallions depicting the gazing face of the Gorgon Medusa. Crafted with exceptional stylistic quality and showing signs of prolonged use, such items are dated to the 5th–4th centuries BC. The mirrors known variously as 'Greek-Scythian', 'Argos-type', or, following T. M. Kuznetsova's 1987 typology, 'Class I, Type IV, Variant 2', are rare but widely distributed across vast territories, typically found in Scythian elite burials. Notably, many of the mirrors were discovered in richly furnished female graves as seen at Mereni, Staikin Verkh or Olbia. These burials, point to an aristocracy in which women held ceremonial roles.

The presence of Medusa's head on the mirrors evokes the dual power of the gaze: it both kills and protects — a force that can be deadly if uncontrolled, but redemptive when mastered, as in the myth of Perseus. Moreover, Medusa's face embodies the paradox of beauty. Once a stunning maiden, she became both captivating and deadly: her allure enthralled, but her gaze enslaved. It was her beauty that ultimately led to her downfall. Before Poseidon's rape, Medusa was renowned for her radiant appearance, transforming attraction into a weaponised power. These mirrors, therefore, functioned not only as utilitarian or cosmetic

objects but also as sophisticated status symbols for an elite familiar with the mythological significance of their imagery.

This paper examines the cross-cultural transmission and reinterpretation of the Medusa myth in nomadic contexts, analysing how the themes of petrification, danger, and divine protection were integrated into local symbolic systems. As Herodotus observed, the Scythians were able to correlate many major Greek deities with their own pantheon (Hestia = Tabiti, Zeus = Papaios, Earth = Api, Apollo = Goitosuros, Aphrodite = Argimpasa Urania, Poseidon = Thagimasadas; Hdt 4.59), suggesting a dynamic process of religious and mythological adaptation. In this light, the adoption of Medusa's image reflects not mere borrowing, but a meaningful incorporation of Greek mythological motifs into the evolving identity of the Scythian elites.

* This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS–UEFISCDI, Funerary landscapes in the Carpatho-Dniestrian area at the beginning of the Late Iron Age, PN-IV-P2-2.1-TE-2023-0015.

Metal finds from the site Kale – Krševica (5th–3rd Century BCE) Ivan VRANIĆ

The Late Iron Age fortified settlement at Kale–Krševica represents a rare example of an archaeological site constructed using Greek architectural elements within the territory of Serbia. In addition to the architecture, most of the objects were produced with knowledge of specific Greek production techniques, and numerous imported items are also present. This archaeological issue has been thoroughly explored regarding architecture (e.g., ashlar and mudbrick ramparts, houses) and some categories of movable finds, such as both local and imported pottery. However, metal finds have not been sufficiently researched to date.

This presentation focuses on the metal finds uncovered during nearly two decades of excavation. The goal is to determine whether these bronze, iron, and other metal objects also follow the same pattern of local production that incorporates certain Greek technological elements, alongside imported items.

Is everything from Greece? Rethinking technological vectors in the transmission of Kiln technologies to Central Europe in the Iron Age

Elena PARALOVO, Tomáš MANGEL, Richard THÉR

The end of the Hallstatt period and the beginning of the La Tène period brought fundamental changes to pottery production across Central Europe. During the 6th–5th centuries BCE, the use of the potter's wheel locally emerged for the first time. Around the turn of the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, two-chamber vertical pottery kilns also came into use north of the Alps. Both technologies are symptoms of the rise of specialized pottery production, and their origins are typically linked to the Mediterranean world.

While the spread of the potter's wheel is generally seen as a result of cultural transmission from the Greek world, the origins and transmission pathways of two-chamber vertical kilns remain more ambiguous. The prevailing view has been that these kilns were introduced into the northern Carpathian Basin in the early La Tène period, subsequently evolving into a distinctive La Tène variant as they spread further across Central

Europe. However, an alternative hypothesis considers Northern Italy as a potential source of this innovation. Archaeological evidence from the region reveals the existence of complex kiln types as early as the 13th century BC, with growing sophistication by the 8th–7th centuries BCE, Notably, two-chamber vertical kilns, structurally very similar to those in the Greek world, are attested during this period.

This paper investigates the possible pathways through which new firing devices reached Central Europe, during a period of profound transformations (6th-4th centuries BCE), by challenging the consolidate assumption that most of the technology came from Greece and contributing to broader debates on technological exchange and cross-cultural interaction in prehistoric Europe.

The encounter between the Greeks and the world of the Gauls/Celts/Galatians (5th to 3rd century BC) in the light of Central European research

Wolfgang DAVID

The contact zones between the Greeks and the Iron Age cultures of Central Europe, which are associated with the Gauls/Celts/Galatians in ancient written sources, are located in what is now southern France, the upper Adriatic region and the Danube region. The contacts in the hinterland of the Gulf of Lions in southern France and, in connection with the popular idea of the 'Celtic migrations', the military incursions of 280–277 BC have always held a special fascination for archaeological and historical research. There are reasons to reconsider the colourful picture that has prevailed in Central European research to date regarding the confrontation between the Gauls/Celts/Galatians and the Greek world from different perspectives and in a more differentiated manner, and consequently to evaluate some details differently.

Gold Connections: Tsibar Neck Ring. Commentaria Archaeologica et HistoricaJulij EMILOV

The focus of the presentation is a gold neck ring featuring Waldalgesheim-style decorations, found on the right side of the Danube near the Tsibar villages in Northwest Bulgaria, over a century ago.

The archaeological story about a Celtic lady from Transylvania, who most likely entered into matrimony and settled in the lands of the Triballoi, highlights the phenomenon of patrilocal mobility during the time of the Argead military campaign and the earliest Celtic diplomatic activities in the region.

The talk addresses the topic of the 'material and immaterial' dimensions of interactions in the late 4th century BCE.

From South to North. Travelling images and symbols across the northern Balkans in the 4th-1st centuries BC

Aurel RUSTOIU

The paper is taking into discussion the images depicted on some vessels from Rogozen hoard, in Bulgaria (4th century BC), and on the phalerae from Lupu hoard, in Transylvania (2nd-1st century BC) and their symbolical mining. This imaginary travel from Rogozen to Lupu and back has allowed an exploration of the ways in which a series of iconographic themes specific to the aristocracy of the northern Balkans evolved and were transformed during the second half of the 1st millennium BC.

The image of the unicorn bird of prey with a fish in its beak and holding a hare in its talons, and that of the eagle and the snake are pointing to the unity between the symbolic spaces (celestial, earthly and aquatic) within which the destinies of the mortals and immortals were intertwined.

One particular category among the mortals comprised the elites of the communities, who had a privileged relation with the supernatural, being particularly protected by a winged female deity that governed over the wild world and its inhabitants. This winged deity invested them with the prerogatives of power, thus enshrining their status in a highly hierarchic society, like the one of the Thracian populations in the 5th – 3rd centuries BC, or that of the later communities, in which the highest social rank was probably inherited within the same families.

This ideology of power can be observed in the iconography. The symbolic meaning of these images was transmitted through time even after the dissolution of the aristocratic system of power from the 5th – 3rd centuries BC, though the core part was gradually adapted to the new social conditions of the 2nd – 1st centuries BC. The spatial and temporal migration of this symbolic language could not have happened without the mobility of the people who preserved and transformed it.

So far but so close. Drinking practices in the Carpathian basin Boris KAVUR

The discovered imported metal vessel in the Pannonian basin, such as the fragmented bronze chytridion from the destroyed Celtic cemetery in Aradul Neu in Romanian Banat, were elements of the Greek/Macedonian drinking sets popular in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. Archaic drinking practices (and cultural norms related to them) were closely interconnected to the wider and complex template of archaic communities. Members of these actively and often enthusiastically engaged in wine drinking that was not only a socially embedded practice but also the consumption of alcohol was a consistent and constructive element of social and political networks and ideologies. It was precisely this social potency of drinking vessels, their symbolic capital, that can explain the attitudes of the Celtic elites towards them. The social and behavioral model, initially linked to the aristocratic world, progressively extended to all levels of the society in Greece and beyond the borders of the Greek world where Ancient Macedonia played a crucial role in this process. In southern Italy we are witnessing a huge increase of quantity of items positioned in the graves and the presence of luxurious Greek pottery and metal vessels prove the deep acceptance of Greek culture and paideia. In the northern Black Sea region and Thrace, especially in strict relations to ancient Macedonia

and the presence of Greek colonies, we can see an increase usage of imports or even a development of local production of bronze and silver vessels.

Gifts of the Greeks: Hellenistic imports at Ivancea Sub Pădure (Poienești-Lucașeuca culture) Michael MEYER, Octavian MUNTEANU, Cristian COROLENCO

We propose discussing the subject anchored in the multitude of processes that define the Poieneşti-Lucășeuca (P-L) culture, which belongs to the latenized group from the north-west of the Pont Euxin. This culture illustrates a complex process of human mobility and cultural exchange in the late Second Iron Age, involving the regions of Central and South-Eastern Europe, as well as the Eastern Mediterranean. Recent research at the Ivancea – sub Pădure site in central Moldova has incorporated a number of interdisciplinary methods, such as magnetometric prospecting, 3D modelling, and spatial analysis of archaeological materials. These techniques enabled the precise delineation of the settlement and the distribution of archaeological structures and artefacts, providing a more detailed insight into the organisation and dynamics of the P-L community.

Recent research has revealed many interesting aspects, and we have chosen to focus on the analysis of Hellenistic and early Roman imports, particularly amphorae and luxury ceramics. These artefacts serve as essential chronological markers for reconstructing the developmental phases of the P-L culture and are valuable indicators of the network of links established between the Hellenistic and barbarian worlds. While the traditional centres of amphora production within the P-L culture were mainly Rhodes, Sinope, Kos and Thasos, recent research has also revealed new centres such as Paros and Knidos. At the same time, the new finds suggest that imported products were introduced into the region early on, in the late 3rd—early 2nd century BC. New types of finds, such as certain types of Sinopian amphorae, also confirm the presence of Hellenistic imports at a later date than was previously thought, dating from the late 1st century BC and possibly even later. The presence of amphorae and luxury ceramics also suggests a hierarchical social structure, in which the elite had permanent access to such goods. The circulation of these goods reflects the region's ability to maintain economic relations with the Mediterranean and Pontic worlds, serving as indicators of social status and long-distance trade links.

Thracians and Celts in the Region of Chirpan Eminences (Southern Bulgaria): the Karakochova burial mound

Milena TONKOVA, Zdravko DIMITROV

The Karakocheva mound at the village of Bratya Daskalovi near Chirpan is a burial complex, the formation of which spans several centuries. The primary mound, piled on the ancient terrain, is associated with a rich grave with cremation. The burial inventory includes a ceramic crater with geometric decoration, iron tools, fibulae and other silver jewelry. The tomb is dated back to the 1st century BC, according to a republican denarius, found there.

The burial itself included various ritual actions, traces of which are the collective finds of ceramic vessels and silver coins, including imitations of Celtic coins. The analysis of the ritual and the gifts offered evidence of the

cultural symbiosis between the Thracians and the Celts in the region of the Chirpan Eminences during the late Hellenistic Age. Other nine secondary burials from the Roman imperial period, 2nd – 3rd c. AD, were made later in the embankment of the mound.

Imported Prestige? Material Traces of Mediterranean Influences in the Collections of the National Museum of Transylvanian History

Malvinka URÁK

The National Museum of Transylvanian History preserves a modest yet diverse assemblage of Mediterranean imports, including bronze vessels primarily intended for beverage consumption, alongside items of military equipment and personal adornment. Some of these artefacts rank among the earliest donations and acquisitions made by the Transylvanian Museum Society—the institutional forerunner of today's National Museum of Transylvanian History—while others entered the collection under more adventurous or undocumented circumstances. Regardless of their provenance, these objects reflect the material dimension of long-distance interactions and the circulation of goods, as well as the adaptation of practices, from the Mediterranean world to the communities inhabiting the ancient Carpathian Basin.

The presence of such imports in Transylvania provides valuable insight into the socio-economic dynamics of ancient societies. These objects signal the refined tastes and cultural aspirations of local elites, who sought to emulate Mediterranean lifestyles and reinforce their social standing by possessing exotic and prestigious items. At the same time, they invite a reassessment of prevailing narratives surrounding ancient globalisation and connectivity. Far from being isolated, the so-called 'barbarian' societies of this region participated in complex and far-reaching economic, social, and cultural networks. As such, this collection testifies to the enduring impact of Mediterranean civilisation on the material culture of communities traditionally viewed as peripheral.

Shared Customs, Divergent Identities: Toiletry Sets from the Greek World to the Carpathian Basin

Andrei GEORGESCU

Cultural interaction between the eastern Mediterranean and temperate Europe is often reflected in the archaeological record through the movement of objects across regions. However, these exchanges go beyond mere material culture—people also travel, bringing with them customs and ideas that are less tangible but equally transformative. One such cultural element is the use of toiletry sets in funerary contexts, a practice well-documented in the Greek world, particularly in female burials from the Peloponnesian peninsula and Greek colonies. Beginning in the 4th century BC, this custom emerges in La Tène period cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, yet its meaning appears to shift within this new context. This presentation offers a statistical and contextual analysis of toiletry sets in La Tène funerary assemblages, exploring how this practice was adapted, transformed, and integrated into the local cultural milieu. Through this case study, the paper contributes to broader discussions on cultural transfer, reinterpretation, and identity within the so-called 'Celtic horizon' of temperate Europe.

Glass beads discovered in the eastern Carpathian basin as indicators of interaction with the eastern Mediterranean and the shores of the Black Sea during the La Tène period Adrian Cătălin CĂSĂLEAN

Archaeological research conducted on Second Iron Age sites in the eastern Carpathian basin has brought to light a wide array of glass beads. These artefacts display diverse forms, sizes, colours, and decorative motifs—some found as singular objects, others as components of complex necklaces. Their discovery contexts mostly reflect their use as ornaments in everyday life or on special occasions within settlements, as well as their role in ritual or funerary practices and depositions.

Although characterized by a wide typological range, several glass beads suggest contacts between communities and individuals from the Eastern Carpathian Basin and those from the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. These interactions likely facilitated the circulation of goods—such as glass ornaments—along with their symbolic meanings, spiritual associations, manners of wearing, and fashion-related practices.

In this context, the current study aims to collect and analyse all known published and unpublished glass beads from the targeted area. The analysis addresses multiple aspects, including manufacturing techniques, morphological characteristics, typological classifications, and chronological potential, all interpreted in relation to their archaeological contexts. Ultimately, the gathered data will be assessed to explore the ways in which these objects circulated to and within the eastern Carpathian basin, how they were perceived and used, and what roles glass ornaments played within the spiritual, practical, and artistic frameworks of Late Iron Age communities.

At the crossroads towards Hyperborea: Atenica and its world Katarina DMITROVIĆ, Marija LJUŠTINA

When mentioning the two princely tumuli from Atenica in Serbia, the first association is expected to be the abundance and richness of grave goods which furnished the burials. Aside from these extraordinary commodities, these mounds stand out by their dimensions and burial structures made of stone and earth, altogether indicating very high status of the deceased. They significantly differ from the rest of the graves from the surroundings dated to the 6th/5th century BC, which makes them a unique archaeological site in a wider region.

The exceptionality comes from the status of the deceased, most probably chiefs/princes of the local communities, who possessed both a large fortune and important contacts. Thanks to that, they were capable of erecting these impressive tombs. Their power at least partially stemmed from controlling routes, especially hubs in the branched road network system of the Iron Age in the western and central Balkans. This local network provided good wider connectivity. The power and influence of the local rulers enabled accumulation of material goods among privileged members of society, and vice versa: accumulation of goods in hands of a restricted number of people kept them powerful and influenced. It is manifested archaeologically in rich and massive, often exotic grave finds originating from very distant workshops. The possession and display of

such objects demonstrated the supremacy of the Central Balkans ruling elite living in the middle of the last millennium BC.

This study is aimed towards examining the finds from the mounds in Atenica in more detail, tracing the origins and reconstructing the ways of their acquisition. It is already obvious that the grave goods are very diverse and that they point to 'the four corners of the world'. The goods from the Mediterranean, the rich world of the Greek and Etruscan civilisations, are recognized in this Central Balkans context, as expected. Interestingly, there are indicators that the world of the Atenica princes was integrated in the northern, Hyperborean world, too. There are items originating from the northeast and the Scythian zone, and also from Central Europe and the eastern Hallstatt cultural circle. Concentration of such varied commodities points to the vicinity of modern city of Čačak in the West Morava valley, where undoubtedly a hub in a complex trade and exchange network once existed.

Hic sunt Dracones – The Iconography of Dragons in Iron Age Archaeological Finds in the North of the Carpathian Basin

Branislav KOVÁR, Lucia BENEDIKOVÁ

Dragons and related mythical beasts such as griffins were an integral part of La Tène period visual culture, but their representations appeared in Central Europe much earlier – already during the Hallstatt period. These motifs likely reached the region through contact with the Greek and Etruscan worlds; for the Hallstatt period, eastern influences must also be taken into account.

In the Iron Age, depictions of dragons often overlap with those of griffins or serpents, and the differences between them can be difficult to discern. Some scholars, therefore, prefer the term 'griffin' to describe these motifs – mythical winged creatures with the body of a lion and the head of an eagle, commonly found in sculpture and ornamentation. The dragon, in contrast, is typically depicted as a winged reptilian or serpent-like being, often with multiple heads. The dragon motif is essentially a global phenomenon. However, identifying specific creatures in archaeological finds and iconography is particularly challenging. On artefacts, we often find heads that cannot be definitively classified as dragons, griffins, or serpents. This ambiguity may have been intentional – such hybrid beings could have been designed to represent multiple entities or attributes.

In archaeological finds from the Iron Age in the North of the Carpathian Basin, dragon-like creatures appear on sword scabbards, belt clasps, fibulae (often alongside other animals), coins, various types of fittings, helmets, and vessels.

This paper surveys the occurrence of dragon and dragon-like imagery in the material culture of the Iron Age in the North of the Carpathian Basin and offers an interpretation of its origins and development within this specific cultural and chronological framework.

Change and exchange: a dichotomous approach to the Late Iron Age Archaeology of the East-Carpathian space in the context of the cultural interactions between the Greeks and 'Barbarians'

Mihail BĂŢ, Aurel ZANOCI

The archaeology of the East-Carpathian area would have looked very different without the historical and chronological significance of Greek goods. The emergence and spread of Greek civilization in this region led to a reconfiguration of local societies. This phenomenon is particularly revealed by the circulation of 'foreign' goods. The most numerous category of 'foreign' artefacts is represented by amphora, used for transporting wine and olive oil, as well as other goods. The explanation for this situation likely lies in the fact that wine was a product accessible to broader layers of the population, while the accumulation of prestige goods – meant to highlight the social status of their owner – was characteristic only of the elites. Certainly, some of the 'foreign' goods appeared as a result of intermediary activity – namely indigenous merchants –while others resulted from occasional exchanges or through other means such as gifts, looting, and alliances. Not least, the long-distance spread of goods and ideas was also facilitated by the individual human mobility of artisans and warriors. For example, recent research has suggested that elements of Central European 'fashion' represent a possible outcome of goods circulation carried out by Greek and Celtic elites. Returning to the dichotomous aspect announced in the title of our paper, we will also highlight best practices for correlating the data provided by the chronology of Greek 'imports' with other relevant categories of information.

On the Scarcity of Greek-Style Grain Mills in Dacian Fortifications: Interpretations and Research Perspectives

Diandra-Natalia PALL-BOTH

This study investigates the rare occurrences of Greek-type grain mills in fortified Dacian settlements in Transylvania. Although few examples have been discovered, these artefacts provide valuable insight into cultural and technological exchanges between the Dacians and the Mediterranean world during the Late Iron Age.

Grain mills, often made of stone and found in fragmentary condition, tend to be overlooked or misidentified in archaeological excavations. The presence of Greek-type mills raises questions about how such technologies reached the Dacian regions—whether through trade, cultural contact, or local imitation.

Although these sites have been extensively researched, the very limited presence of Greek-type grain mills may indicate that such objects were either rare, not widely adopted, or perhaps even considered impractical within Dacian communities. Alternatively, their scarcity might also partly result from earlier excavation practices that did not always focus on detailed recording of everyday utilitarian artefacts. This ambiguity calls for cautious interpretation and encourages further focused research to better understand the role and significance of these mills in the cultural and economic landscape of Late Iron Age Dacia.

Selective exchange of goods and ideas between the Dacians and the Greeks. The case of painted pottery

Andreea DRĂGAN

In pre-Roman Dacia, the transformative impact of the interaction with the Greek world manifested not only through the exchange of objects but also in the technological, cultural, and political spheres. The population of pre-Roman Dacia extensively utilised Greek technology and objects to convey ideas about power, social status, and socialisation, where the decisive importance of the Greek colonies on the Black Sea shore is widely demonstrated. The diverse manner in which material and immaterial aspects were integrated illustrates a process of selection, shaped by both local and foreign agency. An important category where complex mechanisms of selection manifest is tableware, and specifically painted pottery. The technological and decorative aspects of painted pottery, which evidence two main groups with separate stylistic and chronological developments, produced at extra-Carpathian and intra-Carpathian sites, respectively, will be explored to identify the agents involved in the particular uses of this ceramic product.

Traces of interactions between Greeks and Barbarians north of the Danube, reflected in the production of the barbarian pottery in the 2nd c. BC - 1st c. AD

Mariana-Cristina POPESCU, Gabriela GHEORGHIU

Greek pottery produced in the workshops of Pontic apoikiai has been known North of the Danube since at least the 6th c. BC. There are no original pieces but the local forms whose models are undoubtedly Greek sugested that the local potters knew the Greek products and adopted and adapted specific forms in their workshops. Acording to the informations known so far, the production of Histria workshops has a significat influence upon the local pottery production in the indigenous millieu from the city vicinity and beyond the left bank of the Danube.

Greek vessels are documented north of the Danube in the second half of the 4th c. – first half of the 3rd c. BC, if we consider the Attic products discovered in the Getae settlement in Zimnicea, Poiana and Buneşti 'Avereşti'. But these pieces have no echo in the local pottery production, the local potters being devoted to previously adopted and adapted Greek forms.

During the 2nd c. BC to the very beginning of the 2nd c. AD, a significant and progressiv growth of the Greek vessels – from Asia Minor and Pont - influx north of the Danube in the Getae and Dacian millieu could be observed, as well as a significant impetus in the adoptation and adaptation of Asia Minor and Pontic forms in local workshops.

Following this fenomenon - of the adoptation and adaptation of vessels forms from Asia Minor and Pont in local workshops - one could observe that in settlements where there are imported vessels, local potters adopted and adapted a variety of forms, decorations and production tecniques to local fashion/tastes.

On the contrary, in the settlement where there are no imported vessels or they are documented in limited quantities, for a very short period of time, it could be observed that the adopted and adapted Greek forms have echoed in the production of workshops that supplied these settlements.

This is the case of two Dacian settlement from the inner Carpathian arch – Mereşti 'Dâmbul Pipaşilor' and Jigodin I 'Câmpul Morii'. At Mereşti 'Dâmbul Pipaşilor' there is no trace of imported vessels as far as we know, instead the adopted and adapted models from Asia Minor and Pont are significant in terms of variety and quantity. At Jigodin I 'Câmpul Morii' the situation is similar until about the middle of the 1st c AD when the Pontic Sigillata is documented in the southeast of the inner Carpathian arch, including this settlement. After direct contact with Pontic Sigillata the potters addopted and adapted new forms.

These two particular cases sugested two patterns of adoption and adaptation of the Greek forms in the barbarian millieu. One when the potters have only an intermediate contact with the models. The other one when new forms were initially adopted and adapted following the local products inspired by the Asia Minor and Pontic models and then, the potters' repertoire augmented when they have the direct contact with the models.

Cultural interactions between Greeks and Dacians. Case study: Greek coins discovered in the Sureanu Mountains area with metal detectors

Claudiu PURDEA

In the area of the sites of Costeşti-Cetățuie and Piatra Roşie, the presence of monetary issues of the Greek colonies on the Black Sea has been reported since the first half of the 20th century. These discoveries have been attributed to trade relations between the Dacians and these cities. After archaeological poaching devastated the integrity of the sites in the Şureanu Mountains, the judicial authorities obtained information that a hoard of 3600 gold staters was stolen from Sarmizegetusa Regia. They also identified during house searches 18 bronze coins issued by Greek colonies on the Black Sea (Istros) in the 1st century BC, which were partially published. Even if these coins belong to the category of less spectacular goods, their presence in the area of the Dacian fortresses confirms the relations that the Dacians had with the Greek world. Although stolen from archaeological contexts, this type of coins are specific only to some of the fortifications of the Şureanu Mountains. My presentation aims at cataloging all these issues, indicating their provenance and possible explanations for their arrival in the area of the Dacian fortresses.

Roman examples of *crepundia* type necklaces and their roots in the Greek world. A special look to the provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior/Scythia Minor

Ana HAMAT, Ştefan GEORGESCU

Crepundia type necklaces have remained a topic that has not yet been addressed by Romanian historiography, and therefore, we wish to bring them into discussion with this special occasion.

In order to explain properly their functionality, we will use examples discovered in Dacia at Apulum and Tibiscum, but also in Moesia Inferior/Scythia Minor at Tomis and Kallatis. For a coherent explanation of their importance in the Roman era, it is necessary to bring into discussion their inspiration from the Greek world. Although there are not many known examples from the Roman provinces on the territory of today Romania, the few ones that we discovered already have a known origin, being dated in the Roman era, from the

beginning of the Principate to the mid-4th century AD., being one of the known examples of the takeover of Greek fashion by the Roman society.

From Walls to Weights: Assessing Hellenistic Modules at the Ardeu Fortress

Iosif Vasile FERENCZ, Roxana CIRT

Ardeu Fortress (Hunedoara County, Romania) has been investigated over the past two decades by the Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilisation, Deva, and partners, refining the site's occupational sequence and highlighting an intensive horizon within the Dacian kingdom. The site is significant both for the diversity of its archaeological record and for several distinctive traits; notably, Ardeu is one of only two Dacian-period monuments north of the Mureş River to incorporate large, dressed limestone blocks fashioned in a Hellenistic manner.

This paper focuses on metrology—an evidence class rarely treated systematically within regional studies with high potential for testing construction practice, standardisation, and exchange. We adopt three widely attested Greek feet as working hypotheses—Attic/lonic ≈ 0.296 m, Doric ≈ 0.327 m, Aeginetan ≈ 0.333 m—and test for integer and sub-foot cadences (½, ¼, ½), the latter warranted by the 24-digit subdivision of the Doric foot. The preferred module is identified by minimising residuals to the nearest allowed multiple across independent dimensions, with craft tolerances expected.

In the second part, we analyse a leaf-shaped lead balance weight from Ardeu. Typologically it belongs to the West-Pontic cordiform tradition (as at Histria), framing Hypothesis A: a Greek mina—based reading. Hypothesis B is a libral multiple ($\approx 1\frac{1}{2}$ librae ≈ 491 g), which fits the numbers closely and is reinforced by the Grădiștea Muncelului parallel, a cordiform weight with iron steelyard hardware.

Northwestern Dacia: Periphery space?

Horea POP, Mariana-Cristina POPESCU

Şimleu Silvaniei it is located in the western half of the Sălaj County, north of Şimleu Depression. The city has developed south of the hills known as Măgura Şimleului. This massif, with 597 m altitude, demarcate Şimleu Depression to the north. The Meseş and Plopis Mountains bordered the Depression to the southeast and southwest. Şimleu Depression represents the access interface to the Transylvania from the northwest, along the valleys of the Crasna, Zalău şi Barcău Rivers. In the Dacian period are known 11 fortress that controlled access to the interior of this territory. In the 1st c. AD, 25 monetary and/or jewellery hoards are also known, as well as some specific goods – pottery, glass, bronze or stone - that transited this territory.

The presentation focuses on the ceramic and glass items known at \mbox{Simleu} Silvaniei in the 2nd BC – 1st AD. These items are not necessarily spectacular in terms of production technique and decoration or quantity, but they are significant because they emphasise the connection of this territory in the far northwestern territory inhabited by Dacians with the Pontic and Mediterranean world through the 2nd c. BC – 1st c. AD.

Hellenistic echoes in the Lower Mureş basin

Ioan Cristian CIREAP

Far from the western shore of Pontus Euxinus, with its Greek colonies, the Lower Mureş basin has few Hellenistic influences. Rather, they were brought here by the warlike tribes from the northern Balkans, to whom the penetration of Greek coins can be attributed.

As for ceramics, the number of imports or imitations is, we can say, very limited.

However, as we shall see, they are to be found in some of the Dacian settlements in the Lower Mureş basin.

The revisited story of an unexpected find. The set of Hellenistic jewelleries from Căpâlna Marius Mihai CIUTA

The judicial recovery of a set of Hellenistic jewellery, whose provenance was identified through legal investigation as originating from the Dacian fortress of Căpâlna (Săsciori commune, Alba County), has prompted a series of scholarly responses from archaeologists specializing in the study of the Second Iron Age. The lack of comparable discoveries within the hinterland of the Dacian fortresses in the Şureanu Mountains (1st century BC – 1st century AD), as well as within the Dacian fortifications of the intra-Carpathian region, combined with the inherent uncertainties concerning the precise provenance context (uncertainties acknowledged a priori by archaeologists), has raised a legitimate and necessary question: *Were these artifacts indeed discovered within the fortress or its immediate surroundings at Căpâlna?* The present study seeks to examine and compare the evidence produced by the judicial inquiry with that derived from archaeological analysis.

Plants, Power, and Connectivity: Archaeobotanical Insights from La Tène Transylvania Beatrice CIUTA

This paper explores the material and immaterial dimensions of cultural exchange during the La Tène period in Transylvania, through the lens of archaeobotanical evidence. Drawing on macro-remain analyses from several Dacian sites - including Sarmizegetusa Regia, Piatra Craivii, Căpâlna, Tipia Ormenișului, and Şimleul Silvaniei- the study reconstructs patterns of plant use and investigates how agricultural knowledge, crop preferences, and food-related practices reflect broader intercultural dynamics.

The archaeobotanical dataset reveals a diversified plant economy centered on cereals such as *Triticum aestivum*, *Hordeum vulgare*, *Secale cereale*, and *Panicum miliaceum*, accompanied by pulses including *Vicia faba*, *Pisum sativum*, and *Lens culinaris*. Oil and fiber plants like *Linum usitatissimum* and *Camelina sativa* were also present, likely associated with textile production and long-distance exchange networks. These findings suggest a complex and specialized agricultural strategy, with clear evidence of surplus management and long-term storage, including silos, charred grain clusters, and large ceramic containers recovered from domestic and strategic contexts.

Beyond the material record, the study addresses key questions regarding the spread and selective adoption of new crops and cultivation practices. Were these species introduced through trade, migration, or local experimentation? How were external agronomic ideas integrated or reinterpreted within local traditions? The paper also considers the symbolic and social significance of particular plants, exploring their potential roles in feasting, ritual contexts, or as markers of elite identity. By integrating archaeobotanical data with archaeological and historical sources, the research offers a more nuanced understanding of cultural connectivity and transformation in the Dacian world during the Late Iron Age.

The funerary use of sulphur in the Roman Mediterranean World: evidence from the province of Dacia and beyond

Marina MUSTEAŢĂ

Sulphur is an element that had various functions in the Ancient Mediterranean world. Its uses were first attested by Greek writers such as Homer, Thucydides, and Hippocrates, and were later described in more detail by the Roman writers. According to the Greek sources, sulphur was used to purify objects and spaces by fumigation, to produce fires in warfare, and as an ingredient in healing remedies. Among the Roman writers, Pliny the Elder, in his work *Naturalis Historia*, also referred to an experiment of the Greek physician Anaxilaüs who placed fragments of sulphur in a cup of wine and hot coals beneath it to create a death-like yellowish visual effect. Such cups, containing sulphur fragments and charcoal, have been found in Roman Dacia, in the flat cemeteries of Romula and Sucidava. If sulphur fumes were used to purify the air during funerary ceremonies, it is intriguing that mourners chose to burn it in cups rather than in a specialised vessel such as a *turibulum*. This study aims to examine the distribution of this funerary ritual across the Roman world, analyse the contexts in which it was discovered, and explore how it may express social identity, using statistical principal component analysis.

'Grasping the Past': Bronze Chest Handles with Graeco-Roman Motifs in Roman Dacia Bogdan LĂPUŞAN

This study analyses 26 bronze chest handles discovered in the province of Dacia. Traditionally, these artefacts have been considered almost exclusively as handles of bronze vessels or helmets. Nevertheless, the research of several archaeological contexts across the Roman world has shown that similar handles have been discovered alongside the remains of chests. The handles of bronze vessels or helmets are designed differently from those placed on chests. The chest handles under discussion are shaped as two opposing sea creatures (such as dolphins and sea panthers) and some feature a central motif represented by various objects (shells, rhomboidal elements, protuberances), the *Gorgoneion* (the decapitated head of Medusa) or other figures. These mythological creatures were part of the Greek artistic imaginary, continuing and altering through the Roman period and beyond. In addition to their purely decorative function, the representations on these handles allude to various mythological narratives, conveying a symbolic and apotropaic significance to the objects. This research examines the contexts of discovery of the handles throughout the province of Dacia, in order to provide insights about consumption patterns at the provincial level. Additionally, the study

includes a morphological, iconographic and functional analysis of the artefacts, along with their typological and chronological classification.

Why keep it simple? The Dionysian marine *thiasos* on a ceramic mould from Apulum (Alba Iulia, Romania)

Mariana EGRI

The paper is discussing the complex iconography of a ceramic mould which was discovered in the area of the ceramic workshop B which preceded the sanctuary of Liber Pater from the northern limits of the *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis* (Partoş neighbourhood in modern Alba Iulia, Romania). The mould has an irregular ellipsoid shape without a defined rim and a thick short moulded handle on its back side. The front side depicts in negative a youthful nude Dionysos riding a marine monster having a feline body and a fish tail. A number of other symbolic elements are shown on and around the central figure.

Within the iconography of the Dionysian *thiasos*, this particular image is far less common, even on marble sarcophagi of the late $2^{nd} - 3^{rd}$ centuries AD, when the mythical triumphal return of the god of wine from his Oriental exploits gained eschatological meanings. The youthful Dionysos and his marine panther are more common in the Cnidian ceramic production of the same period, though on these vessels the images are less crowded with symbols than on the mould from Apulum.

From the functional point of view, the mould in question was most likely used in the production of ceramic vessels with applied decoration, though no complete or fragmentary examples with this decoration have been discovered so far. It is not the only mould of this kind, as some others depicting other figures have been discovered in the same workshop and in other workshops from Apulum. However, none displays such a complex image, as they usually consist of a single figure. Its fine details may suggest the existence of a highly skilled artisan who was able to create and produce richly decorated ceramic ware that used a complex visual language.

Starting from these observations, the paper is analysing the most likely origin, structure and function of the image produced by this mould, as well as its possible meanings in the local context.

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